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MEDITATIONS
IN VERSE

JESSIE ELDRIDGE SOUTHWICK



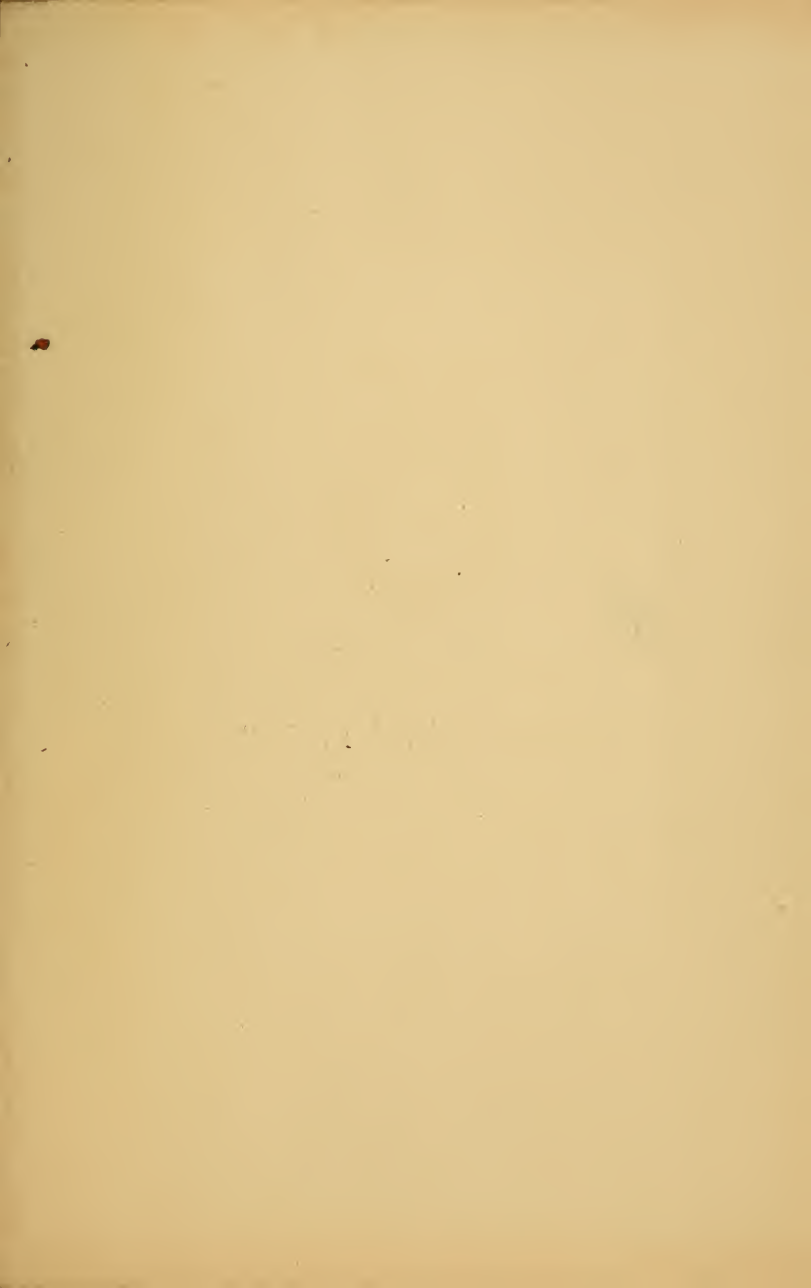


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JESSIE ELDRIDGE SOUTHWICK



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I
TO CHRIST

O CHRIST! Thou Heaven-Born Mystery,
whose life

Was ever sweet with that great love divine
Which gave to other souls that still were sick
With sin, and doubt, and greed, and wan
despair,

A ray of light from the Great Source of all —
Whose Mighty Purpose they misunderstood,
Because they knew not how free-will in man
Could still be rounded by the Will of God,
Whose sweep of universal tendency
Forever makes for good of all, while yet
Permitting individual strength and want
Its full indulgence, till it learn at last
That heaven is love; and hell, love's loss!
Those who, like Thee, forgive are saviors of the
world!



II

PEACE

O PEACE! thou dove divine, whose olive-
branch

Does ever seem to lure us on our way,
Hopeful that some great day,
Or near or far, in future destiny
We may attain thy purity and grace
And, worthy to meet God face to face,
We may be called His children for the good
We do to others, banish fear,
And hate, and falsehood, so that then
No drums may beat, nor bugle call to arms
Because the nations fiercely rush to war,
Destroying millions who perhaps have never
known the cause,
Save to defend their country's honor from
defeat.
O Peace, teach us to live by thy blest spirit's
light.



III

PHILOSOPHY

PHILOSOPHY! thou sweet, consoling
guide,
Whose soft, harmonious thoughts now weave
the spell
Of Peace within my soul, I see
That through the vast, perplexing web of life
Or bright, or dark, there still persists
A thread of light, which is forevermore
The aspiration of the soul toward good.
And, surely, this continuous strain of gold
Whose gleam distinguishes the truth from lies
Will win our hearts at last to mutual aid,
And educate our willing hands to shape
Each flower in the growing wreath of life
To just conformity with all the plan
That makes for human happiness and love!



IV

FAITH

FAITH is not credulous belief of aught
That may be taught by ignorance, nor
vain

Delusion, born of fancied need and naught
But broken aspiration, or desire, or pain.
Faith is the soul's eternal light of truth,
By which we see the meaning of God's Plan.
For 't is of reason a concentrate sum,
Catching the fore-gleams of the Truth that
shines

In realms of thought which logic finds at last
By slow degrees; but ever,— as the sun
Glints in the atom,— so faith feels
Within itself the portrait of that Truth
Which comes all throbbing from the Heart of
God —

And to the obedient spirit gives its Light!



THE WAY TO LIFE

THE way to Life seems hard, till we perceive

That all the ills we dread are but our spur,
To make of all the forces we now fear
Means to arouse the soul to mighty work;
The godlike power to do, and dare, and will!
For — ever was it so — we sleep, and dream
Of noble things, until some shock, or strain
Of tempest in the soul's great sphere,
Or pain which calls the deeps to rise and still
The cry that ever from our childish lips
Would spring, calls us with clarion note and
shouts,

“On to the goal! The quickened sense of being,
The keen perception of the world's great
need,—

This is the waking of the Life Immortal!”



VI

ASPIRATION

O H, 't is the Voice of God, this aspiration!
The needle pointing to the pole of
truth!

The magnetism of its trembling life
Thrills with the meaning of unnumbered lives
Ever more clearly, as the soul ascends,
Sensing the destiny divine of man!
"O but to know the End from the Beginning?"
Nay; that would be to make the ray the sun!
Still be content to know the path of light
Leads to the radiant Center whence it springs;
And comes to us as sunlight steals to seed,
Luring them up to meet the bright above,
So to fulfil their true design, and come
To minister in beauty to the world!



VII

LIBERTY

O FREEDOM! when we see thy sacred
name

Used to confirm the unbridled, selfish whim
That makes for ill through its destroying power
Of passion, or of greed, and vain desire
For that which is of evanescent life,
Then do we know that false pretense does gild
Low, hurtful license with thy name divine!
Far up the heights of human love and truth
Soundeth the note of Liberty sublime!
Clear from those realms of light cometh the
call,—

“Ye who aspire to Freedom must attain
Triumph o’er self; and, climbing Duty’s rocks,
Come to the sphere where all abide in Law:
That Law which binds the Whole to serve each
one!”



VIII

WILL

“**I** WILL!” the spirit saith; and lo! the life
Is lifted from the sordid power of things.
Both Love and Truth fly swiftly to its aid.
Then comes the moment of unthinking act,
Or word that seems the bitterness of fate,
Till all the spirit sought to be seems vain.
Now watch! The foe that lurking to surprise
Has caused the pain of baffled purpose
Flings a sneer, and says to the discouraged one,
“So! Wherefore strive? You see, endeavors
naught avail!”
Now rise and conquer! you who once have
failed.
Yea, tho’ the failure seem a twice-told tale!
Only the giving up is failure!
See! Out of failures comes the slow-built
strength
Of many efforts — till the goal be won



E'en death 's of no account!
For, if the soul yields not, tho' beaten down
'T will rise triumphant in eternal light,
Freed from the pall that, ever round it swathed,
Seemed to obscure the light.
Faith! — Faith, my fellow traveller!
Faith will win the light!
Will is the godlike power of man;
And faith, man's light from God!



IX

TRUTH AND LOVE

THERE is a way of truth
By which we climb to God.
His Will is Truth,
And ours it is to find.
Forever shall we rise
By deeds of love
To heaven — where God abides,
For God is Love!
Are truth and love but one?
What 's love that is not true?
What truth is ever known
That is not for the sake of love
For God or Man?
Then truth and love forever heal
The wounds of sin and hate,
So doth the human spirit feel
That Love and Truth are great.



X

SUPERMAN

VISION of man divine, incarnate God,
Thou to my soul appearest great
As I behold the triumph on thy brow,
Where sit serene self-conquest and pure joy.
The power of certain purpose lights thine eye,
The poise of wisdom, and perception clear,
The gentleness of universal sympathy,
And radiance of love that draweth near
To God, Whom thou dost imitate
In lawful action and harmonious thought;
For thy free-will affirms itself in Him
Who gave it to thee as thy supreme power
To make or mar the beauty of the world!



XI

TRUTH

THE way of Truth is fair,
But hard to find.
In its pure light must dwell
The heart of one
Who by this radiance seeks
To educate
The elements that make
For good of all.
The truth! How precious is
That word to man!
He finds not peace in any
Other way;
For only that brings Light
And Liberty.
The light of Truth is seen by one
Who, pure of heart,
Would ask no freedom for himself
Save right;



The right that makes for
 Universal good.
Then Truth is faithfulness unto
 The right;
The right is what the mind
 Of man conceives
When it is held obedient to
 The Will Divine,
Which tends to universal
 Harmony and Good.



XII

LOVE UNIVERSAL

LOVE is the mystery of life and God;
His tender Love shines in the dewdrop,
there!

It pulses in the harmonies of all the spheres;
It breathes in perfume of the glorious rose.
The tendency of all His Laws we know
Is toward the happiness and strength of man,
Who, tho' he suffer in opposing good,
Knows that the laws of nature serve his soul.
The hand of Supreme Love forever holds
The stars in tune; it thrills in all the joy
Of wholesome life; and e'en when broken law,
Or want of brotherhood in man, or pain
Of sacrifice which love doth make,
Compels the soul to summon all its strength
And rise to heights before undreamed; —
E'en then we see that Love Divine provides
Reward of greater life and purer joy,
A recompense for pain.

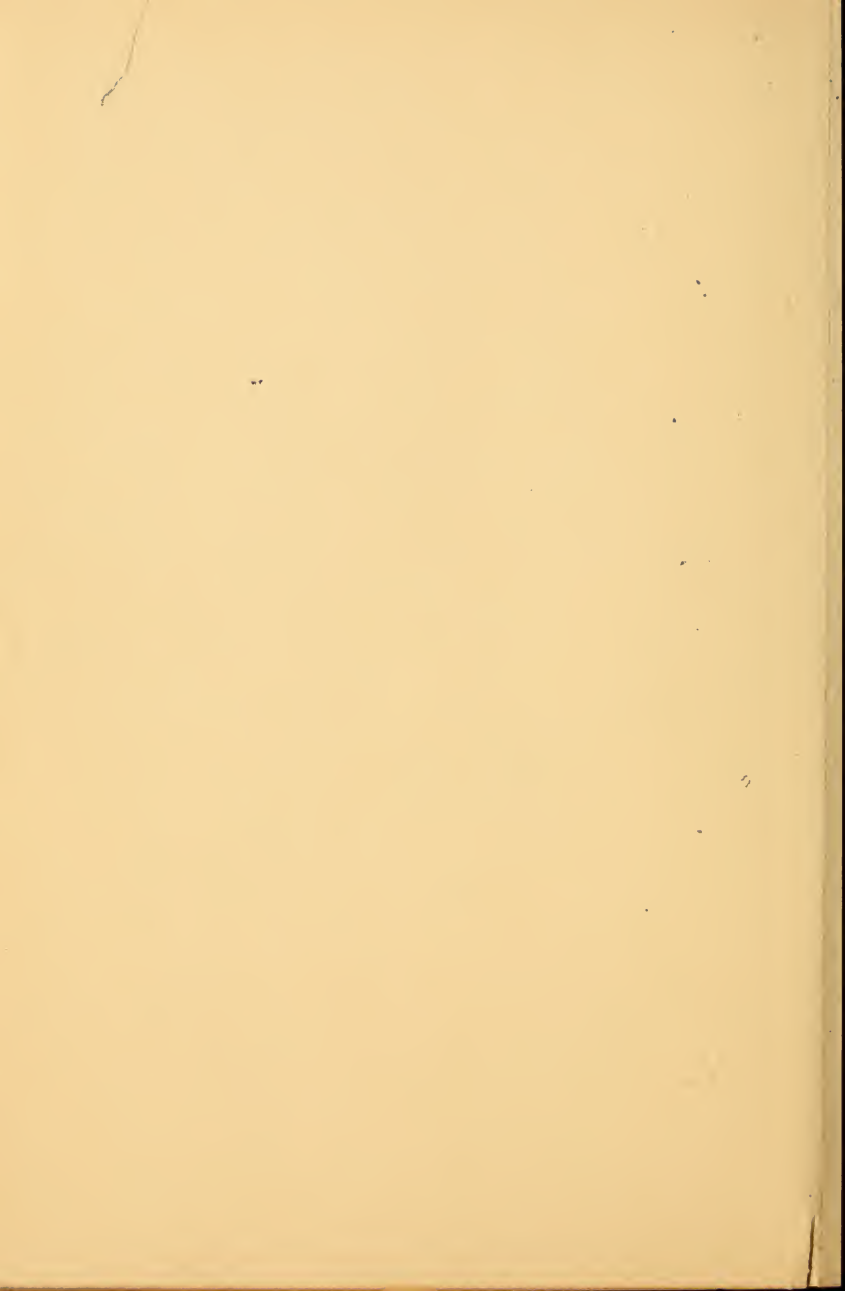


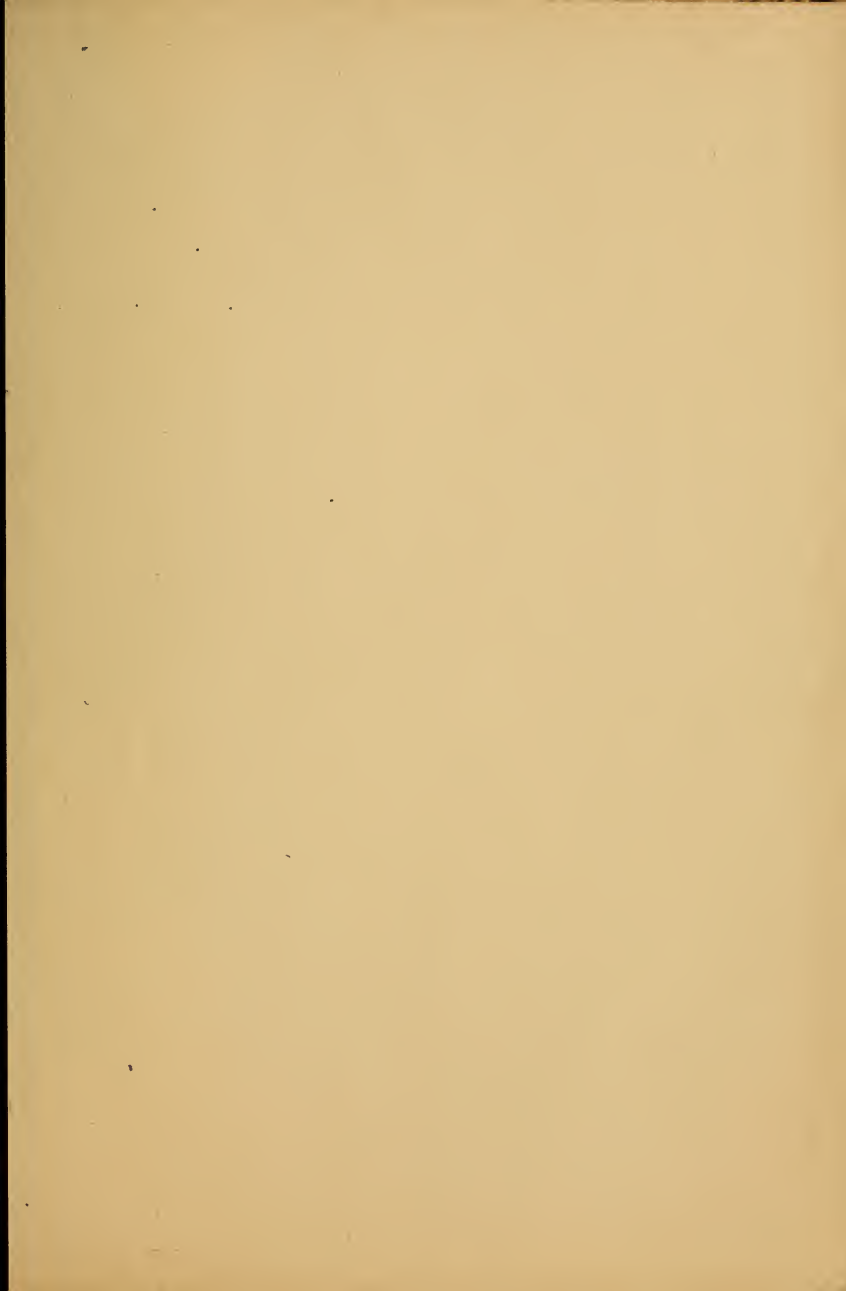












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